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UNCLAS ANKARA 003577

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP AND EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: GOT CONDEMNATION OF MURDER OF PAUL JOHNSON

REF: SECSTATE 135081

Poloff discussed reftel talking points June 22 with Mehmet Kemal Bozay, Chief of Desk at the MFA Deputy Directorate General for the Middle East. Bozay said he and other MFA Middle East specialists had been in Istanbul the previous week working on the OIC Summit, and had not focused on the Johnson murder. He said he would discuss the issue with superiors. On June 23, Gurcan Turkoglu, special assistant to FM Gul, informed DCM that Gul commented on the murder during a press conference in Brussels June 19. Gul condemned the murder and stated that such acts "damage the image of a Muslim country as well as the image of Islam." Turkoglu emphasized that the GOT feels strongly about the issue, noting that Gul made a direct statement that was not in response to a press query. Gul raised the murder at the end of a press conference focused on EU issues; his statement was not widely covered in the press, but was reported by the Anatolia News Agency wire service and at least one Turkish daily.  
EDELMAN